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DEF 12 PAK

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TELEGRAM

XR POL PAK-USSR

XR POL 23-9 PAK

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INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 T-03 IO-13 OMB-01 AID-20 SAJ-01 RSR-01 /141 W

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R 240652Z FEB 73
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8068
 INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
 AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
 AMEMBASSY KABUL
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
 AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
 AMCONSUL KARACHI
 AMCONSUL LAHORE

SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 1606

FROM CHARGE

DEF 12 PAK

XR POL PAK-USSR

SUBJECT: IRAQI/SOVIET ARMS: THE WEB OF SPECULATION

REF: ISLAMABAD 1479, 1523, 1530 AND 1586 (NOTAL)

XR POL 17 Gray - PAK

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1. SUMMARY: EFFORT TO DETERMINE JUST WHAT IRAQIS WERE UP
 TO IN SHIPPING SEVERAL HUNDRED SOV-MADE SUB-MACHINE GUNS
 AND SOME OTHER WEAPONRY TO ISLAMABAD HAS BEEN UNSUCCESS-
 FUL THIS FAR, AND INDEED, WE MAY NEVER KNOW THE PRINCIPAL
 FACTS. GOOD CASE CAN BE MADE (IN ABSTRACT) THAT USSR SOME-
 HOW INVOLVED, BUT THIS REMAINS UNCERTAIN. EVEN PAKISTANIS,
 WHO PRONE TO BELIEVE IRAQIS WERE ACTING FOR SOVS TO HARM
 PAKISTAN, ADMIT THEIR LACK OF PROOF. ARMS INCIDENT NEVER-
 THELESS HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH PAKISTAN
 DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND WILL THUS
 CONTINUE TO MERIT SPECULATION AND SCRUTINY. END SUMMARY

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2. SINCE MY RETURN FROM CONSULTATIONS LAST WEEKEND, I HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO GET FURTHER INFORMATION AND/OR INSIGHT REGARDING PAK HAUL OF SOVIET WEAPONS AT IRAQI CHANCERY HERE FEB 10. TO THIS END I HAVE SOUGHT OUT VARIETY OF GOP OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES FOR THEIR VIEWS. REPORTS OF MY TALKS WITH MID-EAST DIRGEN OF MFA, DIRECTOR OF PAK INTELLIGENCE BUREAU, AND SOV AMB HAVE ALREADY BEEN SENT. OTHERS WITH WHOM I HAVE DISCUSSED ARMS MATTER AT SOME LENGTH INCLUDE BRITISH, FRENCH, SAUDI AND SYRIAN AMBS AND IRANIAN CHARGE, AND GOP INFORMATION SECRETARY. OUR ARMA HAS SEEN AND REPORTED ON HIS MEETINGS THIS WEEK WITH DIRECTOR OF PAK INTERSERVICES INTELLIGENCE AND DIRECTOR OF (ARMY) MILITARY INTELLIGENCE. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN STUDYING A COUPLE OF RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY PRES BHUTTO REFERRING TO THE ARMS INCIDENT AND EXTENSIVE PRESS COMMENTARY. THE FOLLOWING IS WHERE I COME OUT AT THIS MOMENT.

3. THE FACT THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED SUB-MACHINE GUNS OF SOVIET MAKE, AND SOME OTHER SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION, WERE FOUND IN IRAQI EMBASSY HERE IS NOT DISPUTED BY ANYONE. THAT FACT ITSELF HAS SOME IMPORTANCE--PERHAPS MAJOR--FOR PAKISTAN'S DOMESTIC SITUATION AND ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS. BUT THE IMPLICATIONS ARE NOT YET CLEAR IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON THE ARMS OPERATION. FOR EXAMPLE, FOR JUST WHOM WERE THE ARMS INTENDED, WHAT WAS THEIR INTENDED USE, AND WERE ANY OTHERS THAN THE IRAQIS INVOLVED IN SENDING THEM?

4. ORIGIN OF ARMS. THE CENTRAL QUESTION IS WHETHER THE IRAQIS ACTED ALONE. WE GATHER THEY MAY VERY WELL HAVE DONE SO IF THEIR PARTICULAR OBJECTIVE WAS TO HARASS IRAN. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE VERY LITTLE REASON FOR THE IRAQIS ON THEIR OWN TO CARRY OUT AN OPERATION AGAINST PAKISTAN, WITH WHOM THEY APPEAR GENERALLY TO HAVE BEEN TRYING TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS. POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT BAGHDAD MAY HAVE SEEN STRENGTHENING OF DISSIDENT ELEMENTS IN PAKISTANI BALUCHISTAN AS SERVING ITS INTERESTS AGAINST IRAN, JUSTIFYING RISKS OF OPERATION AGAINST PAKISTAN ITSELF. I SUPPOSE THERE IS ALSO POSSIBILITY THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF IRAQI BODY-POLITIC SAW REASONS TO CARRY OUT THIS OPERATION, WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF SOME RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS OF IRAQI GOVT, FOR REASONS NOT NOW PERCEPTIBLE TO US.

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4. CONSENSUS HERE IS THAT CAREER IRAQI AMB SULEYMAN WAS PATHETIC AND REASONABLY INNOCENT VICTIM OF IRAQI ARMS CAPER. HE MUST HAVE KNOWN SOMETHING FISHY WAS GOING ON, WITH CASES STACKED IN HIS EMBASSY MARKED FOR OPENING ONLY BY POL ATTACHE AL-SAUDY. WE GATHER AL-SAUDY WAS NOT UNDER DIRECT CONTROL OF HIS AMB. WE THINK AMB EITHER CHOSE NOT TO ASK WHAT AL-SAUDY WAS UP TO IN IMPORTING CASES WITH QUESTIONABLE CONTENTS, OR THAT IF HE ASKED HE WAS TOLD TO MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS. THOSE OF US WHO KNEW AMB SULEYMAN CONSIDERED HIM PRETTY STRAIGHT-FORWARD CHARACTER. HE LIVED FOR SOME TIME IN WASHINGTON AND EXPRESSED FRIENDLY FEELINGS TOWARD US. HE PRESUMABLY HAD SUBSTANTIAL RESERVATIONS REGARDING CURRENT IRAQI LEADERSHIP.

6. IF ONE LOOKS FOR ANOTHER PARTY ACTING SOMEHOW IN COLLUSION WITH IRAQIS, CHOICE MOST LOGICALLY FALLS ON USSR. WEAPONS ARE OF SOV ORIGIN, AND SOVS ARE WELL ENTRENCHED IN IRAQ. SOVS HAVE INTERESTS IN SUBCONTINENT AND ELSEWHERE IN ASIA WHICH COULD MOTIVATE THEM TO CARRY OUT CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS AGAINST PAK GOVT. FACTORS COULD INCLUDE DISLIKE OF PAK CLOSENESS TO CHINA, PERSONAL DISTRUST OF BHUTTO, AND DESIRE TO BUILD ON SOVIET STRENGTH IN INDIA. THEN THERE IS OLD STORY OF RUSSIAN DESIRE FOR LAND CORRIDOR TO INDIAN OCEAN WATERS, WHICH THEY COULD REACH VIA AFGHANISTAN AND A FRIENDLY BALUCHISTAN. AGAINST PRESUMED LOGIC OF POSSIBLE SOV INVOLVMENT IN IRAQ ARMS INCIDENT, I NOTE DOUBTS THAT USSR SEE ITS INTERESTS IN THIS REGION SERVED AT THIS TIME BY STIRRING UP THE POT IN PAKISTAN (SEE ISLAMABAD 1603 EXPATIATING ON THIS SUBJECT). ALSO ONE MUST WONDER WHETHER, IF SOVS WERE INVOLVED IN THIS INCIDENT, THEY WOULD HAVE DARED TO ALLOW ITS EXECUTION TO REMAIN IN CLUMSY HANDS OF IRAQ (WHICH PERMITTED, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME LOOSE GUNS TO BE SHIPPED IN CANVAS SACKS).

7. PAKISTANIS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN ARE UNANIMOUS, MORE OR LESS STRONGLY, IN STATING THEY ASSUME SOV INVOLVEMENT (ALTHOUGH ADMITTING HARD PROOF LACKING AS OF NOW). FRENCH AMB ASSUMES SBV INVOLVEMENT, SYRIAN AMB DOES NOT RULE OUT SUCH POSSIBILITY (SEEING IRAQIS AS POSSIBLY RESPONDING TO SOV INTERESTS), AND BRITISH AMB UNDECIDED BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN INCLINED BELIEVE SOVS WANTED TO KEEP THIS REGION

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QUIET AT THIS TIME.

8. PAKS HAVE ALSO ALLUDED TO PROBABLE INVOLVEMENT OF INDIA. BHUTTO HAS RECENTLY MADE SUCH CHARGE IN LETTER TO PRES NIXON. (AT SAME TIME BHUTTO SAID AFGHANISTAN ALSO PROBABLY INVOLVED IN SUCH CONSPIRACY). IN TALKING TO NUMBER OF VISITING BRITISH MPS WHO WERE HERE LAST WEEK, BHUTTO AVOIDED IMPLICATING INDIANS DIRECTLY IN ARMS INCIDENT BUT IMPLIED THEY WERE INVOLVED WITH SOVS. GOP IS NOW IN HABIT OF LINKING SOVS AND INDIANS AS WISHING ILL TO PAKISTAN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 1606

9. INTENDED USE OF WEAPONS. IT IS EASIEST TO PROVIDE POLITICAL REASONING IF ONE ASSUMES THAT IRAQ, ACTING PRESUMABLY ALONE, WANTED GUNS TO GO TO CAUSE TROUBLE AGAINST IRAN VIA BALUCHISTAN. UNFORTUNATELY, BALUCHISTAN PREMISE DOES NOT SEEM TO MAKE MUCH SENSE ON LOGISTICAL GROUNDS. LONG, SOFT BALUCHISTAN COASTLINE ON ARABIAN SEA, CONSIDERED TO BE HAVEN FOR SMUGGLERS, APPEARS TO BE MUCH MORE LOGICAL POINT OF ENTRY FOR GUNS DESTINED FOR BALUCHISTAN. NONE OF THE PERSONS WITH WHOM I HAVE SPOKEN THIS WEEK, MENTIONED ABOVE (INCLUDING IRANIAN CHARGE), GIVES MUCH CREDENCE TO THESIS THAT GUNS WERE ACTUALLY INTENDED FOR USE IN BALUCHISTAN.

10. NOR DOES IT SEEM TO MAKE MUCH SENSE THAT GUNS WOULD HAVE BEEN INTENDED FOR INFILTRATION INTO OTHER PRINCIPAL PAKISTAN TROUBLE SPOT, THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE. EVEN IF THE PATHANS DID NOT ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH WEAPONS OF THEIR OWN, MAINLY OF LOCAL MANUFACTURE, SOV WEAPONS

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COULD EASILY BE INFILTRATED INTO NWFP ACROSS THE SOFT AFGHAN-
TRIPAL LAND BORDER.

11. OTHER PRINCIPAL SPECULATION CENTERS ON INTENDED USE
OF WEAPONS BY ANTI-GOP ELEMENTS IN AND AROUND ISLAMABAD CAPITAL AREA
OR URBAN CENTERS OF SURROUNDING PUNJAB STATE. THIS IS THESIS
CURRENTLY FAVORED BY GOP SPOKESMEN, AND IT HAS BEEN
MENTIONED EXPLICITLY BY BHUTTO. THEORY IS THAT OUTBREAK OF
ARMED VIOLENCE THIS AREA WOULD SOW CONFUSION, TEND TOWARD
CHAOS AND WEAKEN GOP ABILITY TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO
CONTAIN TROUBLE IN OTHER AREAS SUCH AS BALUCHISTAN AND
NWFP. BRITISH AMB FOR ONE, INCLINED TOWARD THIS THESIS.

12. WHERE DO WE COME OUT? I HAVE TO ADMIT NOT ONLY
IGNORANCE OF FACTS BUT ALSO UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHAT
IRAQI-SOV ARMS INCIDENT MEANS. INTUITIVELY, I FIND IT HARD
TO BELIEVE THAT IRAQ WOULD HAVE PULLED OFF SUCH A CAPER
WITHOUT AT LEAST KNOWLEDGE IF NOT COMPLICITY OF SOVS, BUT
MAYBE THAT IS SO BECAUSE I MISJUDGE IRAQI CAPABILITY
FOR INDEPENDENT IRRESPONSIBLE ACT. ON OTHER HAND, I RECOG-
NIZE THAT IF SOVS WERE ACCOMPLICES, OR AT LEAST
PARTIES BEFORE THE ACT, WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR PREVIOUS
VIEW THAT MOSCOW PREFERRED AT THIS TIME TO SEE RELATIVE PEACE
IN REGION OF SUBCONTINENT. AS TO INTENDED SPECIFIC USE OF
WEAPONS AFTER THEY REACHED IRAQI EMBASSY HERE, I ADMIT TO
SUBSTANTIAL CONFUSION.

13. I CONCLUDE THAT, AT THIS MOMENT, WE ARE RICH IN
QUESTIONS AND POOR IN FACTS EXCEPT THAT SOME WEAPONS
OF SOV ORIGIN WERE SHIPPED COVERTLY BY THE IRAQIS
TO ISLAMABAD. ALTHOUGH IT IS DISAPPOINTING TO EMERGE
WITH THESE MAJOR UNCERTAINTIES, WE ARE NOT ALONE WITH
THEM. THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS TO KEEP ON ALERT FOR FURTHER
FACTS, WHILE RECOGNIZING WE MAY NEVER GET TO BOTTOM OF
THIS CURIOUS AFFAIR. GDS
SOBER

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